Hashmat Rahimtoola was born in Santa Cruz, Mumbai in 1943. She grew up with a love of nature, playing in the garden of Ishrat Bungalow with her five brothers and sisters and visiting the lakes and hill stations beyond the city. She wrote her first poem at thirteen. She was educated by nuns at St. Teresa's Convent and went on to study English Literature at St. Xavier's Convent. There, she stood first for both her BA Honors in English Literature and her minor in Islamic Culture in Bombay University.

She taught sixth grade for one year at Sacred Heart Boy's School. She also tutored English Literature at Narsi Monjee College for five years, where she worked with the students enrolled in the Cambridge Education enrollment partner program. Her essay on P.B. Shelley, "Prometheus Unbound," received the College's Book Award. In 1977, Hashmat and her husband Rafique moved to the United States where she raised a family, worked as a teacher's assistant, and continued to write poetry.t

Poems Written in a Flutter

Hashmat Rahimtoola

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate *Poems Written in a Flutter*

to my mother, Ishrat Shah,

who inspired my love for reading and nature

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Acknowledgments are due first of all to my daughter, Samia, in helping me put together all my poems and encouraging me to publish them. And to my son, Riaz, for showing me immeasurable sunsets and phases of the changing moon in picturesque phenomena. And to my husband, Rafique, who once asked me to write a poem about the rain. Thanks are also due to Surjit Singh for his wisdom and patience in guiding through the process of editing and publishing my poems. Thanks also to my dear sisters Dilshad Shah and Nagma Gandhi for listening to my poems and giving me their feedback. And this acknowledgement would not be complete without a heartfelt thanks to my dear friend, Yoko, and for my cat, Kansas, who are no more. I feel their immense loss. I can only reminisce delving in a garden of zinnias, sunflowers, and guavas, and swinging in the acacias with them.

Hashmat Rahimtoola
Camarillo, CA, US
July 2023

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Lets ruminate awhile

I feel lost and desolate on this big wide earth, with so many avenues to cross and so many reveries to ponder and so many attractions to picture.

Reign in your thoughts, there may be a cry of fancy trying to make its entrance.

When you wake up, look at the sun peeking out of the gray clouds.

Zara andaaza to laga lo, kitne jaldi ja rahi hai zindagi, uski khushboo to le lo, uske udne se pehle.

Mil jul ke jo jeene me mazaa hai, woh akele mein nahin.

Ab to nazm ka aakhri parcha likh diya, jaise zindagi ki aakhri numaiish, ab kya kohoge, ab kya sunoge, raaze dil guzar gaya.

PREFACE

I became immersed in nature because of my parents. I must have been 6 years old when Ammaji let me choose the lotus flowers from a medley of violet, pink, yellow and white variety of colors from the vendor Haribhav who came to our doorstep. Ishrat Bungalow was colored in green oil paint and the only green house on the street.

There were kyaris or beds of flowers and fruit trees bordering the cemented areas around the bungalow. We decided as children to name our own kyaris. One of the kyaris which was the closest to the entrance of our house had a variety of different colored crotons, the leaves of which we used as monetary notes for our play. Mogra, nargis, raat ki rani, chameli and buttercups were planted along with Badam, Amla and chakotra. Parrots filled the air and ate of the beans from the orange flower tree: red Bird of Paradise, the Caesalpinia. The love of fruits and flowers was apparent in Ammaji.

Bapa bought the vacant land adjacent to the bungalow to fulfil my mother's dream of a garden and replaced the rocky land with rich red soil. On one of our walks back from the beach Ammaji bought 15 coconut palms. I remember counting the number of steps to ensure the coconut palms have enough distance to grow well. It did not take long before the seng tree bordered the street facing the swing and the gulmohar tree to the right of it. The mat like pattern of the gulmohar leaves and its flowers became an inspiration for my poem on the gulmohar. Shehtoot, mangoes, jaman and chikoos grew here and so did the birds.

Morning walks were to the beach: watching the sunrise in its splendid array and playing with the sand and ocean. Bapa would take us to the forest lands surrounding suburban Bombay or to the Aarey milk colony, Powaii or Vihar lakes. We made rivulets from the streams of running water in the jungle and had fun changing their course by digging the earth with our hands. I will never forget once when I wandered in the wilderness alone to an untouched piece of land, a nook on a hilly region, I saw scores of butterflies all yellow flitting around me and then taking off to higher altitudes, making me jump to catch them.

The soft petals of the colored flowers, their scent and smell, the music of the rain as it fell, the yellow butterflies folding their wings in quiet and taking off in a frenzy, all in a spiral above me-and my dance of delight as I tried to catch them, the moon and the stars traversing the skies in their timebelt and my friend Yoko and my cat Kansas-no more-instilled a magical comeback in my poems.

My love for writing was inspired by Ammaji. She opened an account for me at Mrs. Menezes's Book Store near St. Teresa's Convent where I went to school. Most afternoons in my lunch break I would browse through the books to see if any new books had been added to the collection. I enjoyed Enid Blyton's collection of adventures, HG Wells, Alice in Wonderland, Aesop's Fables, and Little Women by Louisa May Alcott. When I delved into the novels of Charles Dickens, I loved The Tale of Two Cities, Oliver Twist, and the Pickwick Papers. Solving murder mysteries by Earl Stanley Gardiner and Agatha Christie became our favorite pastime. I could get whatever books I wanted because she never said no. "Ilm sabse badi daulat hai," she said, "Wealth of knowledge is the utmost."

POEMS

Flame of Gold/The Gulmohar

A design on earth

The mat-like pattern of the gulmohar leaves

Intricate format of shadow and light

The delicate orange taste of its stamen on my lips

Speak of a vibrant color of childhood—

Painted in flowers of red and gold

I could drink and dance to that moment recorded in time

The swing below it and its periphery embroidered on one side with jasmines

And the other with luscious green *seng* hanging in abundance.

Walking With the Moon

Imprint of my eye the moon

Then a piece of cloud

Now fluorescent

Always in disguise

Plays tricks in a transient mood

A piece of rock my brother says

But I feel more aligned with its revolving silvery motion

Glides and rocks amidst the leaves

And patterns my path in silver coins

Then plays hide and seek in the dark orbs

Then emerges and alights like a queen in golden attire.

Grasshopper

Lean grasshopper thank you for your social visit

In mid-air, repartee, repartee, repartee

Brown eyes pierce through your silken coat

Gaze into mine

Sallies, flits, flies, somersaults

Across the green orbs

Whereto?

Stay—your welcome visit continue

So I find respite

And soothe my sojourn grasshopping

Mouse Trap

I was happy in this house

Till you came along Mr. Mouse

For the owner of the house

Clearly shows a preference

For your well-being

I feel entrapped in this house

No traps! he screams

I'm living in the house with a mouse

So tra lala lala till you rouse

Sweet Sorrow

Where sincerity fails lies must occur

A solemn promise of worthy words

How sweet the bond

How blindly trusting

Never to suffer

Never to doubt

A promise meant forever

Ignorance was bliss

That sweet rapture

Who quickly wrote

Adoring, passionate, overflowing

Lines to another

Never was life's cup so bitter

And love so deceived

That it mixed a potion

Of cruel revenge

In its last chapter

Faithless the tears fell

In that cold forsaken hour

A wrong plucked

And a blinded lover!

Love

Love does not contemplate, hesitate

Love expects.

Love rushes like a hummingbird and fills her cup with joy

Love does not quit, back up

Love stays

Love enfolds the petals of your heart

And traces the delicate cores

Love does not hit back, strike

Love understands

Love retrieves the chords in the missing strands

Love grows

Love finds strength in time

Love is far beyond the worldly kinds

Love is uplifting

Love is a light divine

When the sun rises

Each layer of the sky

Heightens its color in a golden guise

I touch its melodious strings

And find some strength in my life

Lonely Hearts

Those dark eyes

Fill me with surprise

My heart cries out to him

But my voice dies

If I could speak

I would tell him

I love him more than myself

I would hold him

Till his desires could be fulfilled

And if he wanted more

I would give it to him

If I could look

I would never stop looking

Till his eyes were full of glistening lights

And if he wanted more

I would fill those dark orbs

With hopes of sweet pleasures

And we would all the gardens roam together

Hand in hand

From the sun lit skies to the star kissed nights

Till time stood still

For that golden hour

That joins two lonely hearts together

Violets

Purple violets full of passion

And their yellow pain

Where can she go

When he hurts like this

And relentless falls the rain

Absence

If you hear the birds calling outside my house

Tell them it's no use for she's not there

Who used to call upon them

If you see the purple flowers

Hanging on the right side of my wall

Share with them the secret pleasures of your mind

For they will miss the sweet converses

I had with them when evening fell

Moon-Gazer

You said you came out to look at the moon

And I understand: not me

What if I were the moon

And I came out on time

And lifted those dark overcrowded shrouds

For a glimpse of your sweet face

Would you have looked at the skies

With those grey gentle eyes?

My heart would stand still

A million years would have passed by

For that moment in eternity

And I would restrain that hour

To last forever in your power

And at last enchantment would exist

The Bower

I want to hide myself behind this purple flower

And dip in the purple ink

And breathe its heavy scent

I want to hide myself behind this leafy bush

And depress in its evergreen blossoms

And crouch in its overgrowth

I want to hide myself

Where no one can find me

A secret retreat, a bed full of violets

An overhanging of daffodils

An alcove in a mossy seat

Melancholy

When nothing more avails

Sweet melancholy prevails

Its veil of dark events

And stops the carriage of that fleeting hour

In a lonely bower

Await that melancholy tune

Which has one sad discord

That breaks the heart

And lays apart

The wounded ocean

To its voluptuous extents

Which lifts the veil

To look and drink to the dregs

The whirlpool of discontented sands

Rain

My heart sings in ecstasy

When the rain falls

And every drop has its delight

How sweet twere to watch the cuckoo shake its feathers off the falling rain

And dance tip toe to solemn music drip drop!

And as the deep purple of the sky buds into pale yellow-grey shades

And scatters the raindrops on every little flower like dew

Or the green hills washed with rain

And each little blade of grass grows green on every side

Or even yet to peep under the leaves

And watch the butterfly's shelter as it closes its wings in quiet.

Delight

To see the butterflies flit across the skies

Like the stars on starry nights

To hear the birds mock tu-whee tu-whee

In sweet notes play upon the Gulmohar leaves

To lie awake and be still

In a half sleep

And take delight in every measure of the birds' treasure

That set off the butterflies in golden attire to their fiery abode

Depress

When the flowers awake

I see your face

Upon the morning dew

Soft as a petal nestling closer

Whispering a melancholy symphony of a dead visage

Words

Certain words which bring emotions to the surface

Like lightning in the sky

Like colors in a dye

Like streams of the river

Like dreams of the lover

Like flames in a fire

Or grief in the pyre?

Satire

Laughter like bubbles in the water

Bursts the purveyor

Smiles the surveyor

An author of affectionate humor

To slap stick tumor

Raises irony or satire

Of a bad temper

Mocks or derides a being like a donkey

Or ridicules someone's absence in irony

Radiance

Is it the radiance of light?

Through a shaft in the roof brightens the room

Is it the radiance of beauty?

Through the whiteness of her skin matches the moon!

Disillusion

Lighted orbs when they're wounded

Are blinded in their plight

Yellow fires when they're kindled

Are whitened in their pyres

Loving hearts when they're broken

Are deadened in their passions

Pitiless in their creations

The Dragonflies

In the peaceful winds of November

The dragonflies flutter and remember

Their past joys

In this grove of adventure

When birds flew in pairs westwards

With the gold on their wings

Or suddenly the sky was covered

By their black yellow rings

And in each halo of light

The dragonflies circled in delight

Till they came upon me

Watching in peace and quiet

Their magic dance and noiseless flight

I am a queen of blessings

A wit of quick succession

And if there be recession

There is no regression in my behavior

For in ultimate faith

I am kind at heart

Well versed in guileless art

Roses

Roses, roses pale and pink

Soft like the magic touch

White and red and golden yellow

Better than the buttercups mellow

Scattered petals crunched

By the feet

Budding roses, blooming roses

Roses plucked and homely set

But roses in the garden are best

Taking Nehru Away

Taking Nehru away

On a funeral gay

There were crowds & crowds of people

On a doleful day

In black array

Solemn was the atmosphere

On a wailing day

O sweet lament!

Taking Nehru away

Nay! Our heart is severed to pieces

On a mournful day

The broken petals a dying lay

On that saddest day

O yet let him stay

Summer Glow

When the roses are most scarlet

The sky an inkish blue

Then soft falls the dew

And dreams are coming true

That's the time

When you can feel

The summer glow

The season's wine

When all is green

In the meadow

I dreamt I was a butterfly

Fluttering under the deep blue sky

Tempting children to break my wings

Daring to dream on little fairy rings

I dreamt I was a buttercup

Nodding in the breeze way up

Painted gold; trying to reach

The orange-hued clouds

To match my dark yellow shroud

I dreamt I was a fairy queen

Dancing with the faint moonbeams

In and out and round and round

And up and down

Till the poor moonbeams lay

Scattered on the ground

I dreamt and I woke up to reality

A broken wing, a feather cup

Was left beside me.

Who is this woman

Who is this woman walking down the street

Holding in its crevices her steps on broken glass

Telling her own story, munching on her sweet delight, a tea shop treat

Stopping at every nook and corner

And gazing at every object on the stands

As her black eyelashes sweep the pictures to her tantalizing eyes

Only one picture reflects of her fiery unkempt strands of hair in my mind.

What a remind! And then jolts me back to the present time.

If only I could catch that glimpse once more

I could stop and tell her,

How she stays in my mind

That delightful Punjabi woman walking down the street.

Ode to Patience

Patience virtue of silence

Canst thou teach me the way to quiet and serene thought

And wishful thinking not translated into blown up words.

And rest in silence like a dove, calm and cool to the touch.

O teach me the way grey philosopher

That I may quieten my tormenting suspicion of base attacks

And have a will raised on a pedestal

Which could break but would not fail in its purpose of true research

For it is the error of life not to build on mistakes committed in the past

And pile upon pile of learned truths

Sparkle your eyes like the glowworms the dark and caving night

For the wise think before they dip

"There's many a slip betwixt the cup and the lip"

And your success a fool's paradise

Venture ahead objectively

To overcome the roughness of the sea or the ravages of the purple sky!

This emptiness that clings to me in lonely isolation

Leaves me stranded like a flower on a barren tree

If I could stay and face the field alone…

A thousand ways trap the path

And the future is an uncertain bird

Neither white nor black

And dims the sight like an abyss.

I am nothing besides the strength of this mighty universe.

In the Moment

Two little white stars in the bougainvillea flower

I never saw them before

Hello, hello they said to me

As I sipped my tea with fresh green mint and tulsi leaves

Grown by me

I smiled back and defied age

As I lived in that moment incessantly

Walking With Linda

The sliver of silver crescent then

Now the incandescent moon

Illuminating the features of the far East

I from India, Linda from Taiwan

Draw string moon

Drawn by the faint silver star perpendicular to you

Wherefore is your journey?

Now making your descent

Then across the skies

You light up the celestial sphere

Amazing phenomena the scientists explain by facts

I do not want to mar the effect by trying to understand

The mysterious forces that rule your precious abode or ethereal strand

You light up our faces

Brown or yellow doesn't make a difference

I from India, Linda from Taiwan.

As I Did My Chores

As I did my chores meticulously to make it a perfect dwelling

I said wait

Let me do nothing

Idle on my favorite chair

Right under the jacaranda tree

And drink heavily from its purple hues

And see the butterflies interlace its colors

Sailing back and forth

In the sun droplets of the grapevine

After the rainfall

And the wind softly wafting in my hair

Calmly hearing the drone of the plane as it switched by

Marring my picturesque scene

And as my pen swiftly wrote what I felt

It inclined its grace

And let magic resonate in the rising air

Sometimes …

Leaving a page without writing

Or filling it up with the remnants of my thoughts

Dwelling in the shadow of words
Sometimes hiding in the recesses of the air

Gulping down the cold, raw wind as it blows by

Cutting me up as it surfaces again

And leaving me burning in its threshold

Desiring your warm embrace

Singing in your deep voice your songs once again

Depressing me in the folds of white lillies

Taking me to a soft spot where I don't feel anymore

Despairing of leaving you

Taking me to your deep cores soft and wet and cold

Deepening where no light can penetrate

Freeing me from your tight hold

Breaking me away from you

Beckoning me to what is not to be

Weaving alluring magical webs

Falsely alluding me to you.

Listening to your voice again

Falling in love with you.

Groping In The Dark

Groping in the dark searching again

No one can trace my tears after I have shed them

No one knows no one cares

Its better this way

Find that glimmer in the shallow water

Find that smile you lost a while ago

Jaane do aur jiyo Jaane do abhi jeene do

Let it go and live… Let it go Let me live now

Where is the yellow and black dotted butterfly

That was resting on the fennel

I followed its rapid course as it flitted from flower to flower in the flowering trees

Stopping only momentarily to drink its savor and opened its wings to make another flight

So fly again and take that course

You will find a savor you never tasted before

Jane do aur jiyo….abhi jeene do

Let it go and live… Let me live now

Come Play With Me

I wake up with the butterflies

I work with the bees

I run across the skies

And wonder who will play with me

Yellow buses passing by

Two ladies walking up their dogs

I look and stare

Will someone smile at me?

I touch the yellow flowers

I swing on the green Acacia tree

I swing high I swing low

Will someone ever swing with me?

Reverie

She is an old woman now

Let her go let her roam in her reverie

She cannot see the falling of the leaves or hear the birds kuhoo, kuhoo

The butterflies as they string their braids on the wings

Or the bumblebee as it feasts on the dahlias

Or the sweet pitter patter of the four year old

Or the little girl, woman now with all her curls in a knot

Or the swinging rattle of the sprightly boy

Not even the cock a doodle as it crows in the first glimmer of the light

Let her rest this precious soul my mother in her peace

URDU POETRY

Doosra Sahara

Ek champe ki khushboo zindagi ki raftaar ko rok leti hai

Baat bannei se pehle hi toot jati hai

Kaise koi himmat nahin karta

Jise apne aap par bharosa nahin

Woh doosrei par kaise karega

Baaz aa gayi mai tumhare gaano se

Ab pata chal raha hai ye phareb ke sivay kuch bhi nahin hai

Ai parvardigar bachalo mujhei aise logon se

Jo kisi aur ke bare mei itna kam sochte hain

Aur apne aap ko bachane me

Doosron ko taqlif iskadar dete hain

Behtar yehi hai mai akele me apni zindagi guzaroun

Aur roun to tumhara saath nahin ho

Woh na kabhi tha na hoga kisika

Aaj mera sher bulund ho gaya Hashmat mujhei tumse kai guna achha sahara milgaya.

Ab Muskuraye Aap

Kitne aansoon chalke en palko mei

Aur chalakte hi jayeinge

Par ye sumundar ki gehrayi ko kabhi bhar na sakeinge

Aur jab ye hote kapkapaeinge

Mai Allah Miyan se dua maangoongi

Inhei rok lein

Aur phirse muskurane ki himmat dedein.

Bachpan Ke Din

Woh kahan gayi jo choti si ladki thi

Hasti thi aur khelti thi

Woh neem ki niboliyan

Woh kale,kale jaman

Aur baarish mei bheegie hui

Woh amrood aur aam ki daliyan

Woh divaron ka phalangna

Aur phir dehleez paarkar

Kazi kaka ke aangan mei jaana

Mazese safeid jambu jeb mei bharna

Aur Krishna phool ka rath chalana

Phir chori chori nazar bachakar kadi patta todna

Chor chor! Uph Kazi kaka nei dekh liya

Aur phir tezi se dekhe baghair sar ke bal bhagna

Woh kahan gaye bachpan ke din.

Aaj Pata Laga

Aaj pata laga mere ho gaye tum

Mere ho gaye tum

Kitne kitne din kitni kitni ratei

Ye zard lakiron ke kinare

Ye kajal bhare sitare

Ghalat fahmiyan itni badhi

Ke apni apni aag me sulagte rahei

Rok na saki is raftaar ko tu

Ek doosrei par khaak bannei ka ilzaam laga diya

Aur janeman se anjane ban gaye

Kya hasin nazrana tha

Woh jisnei mukammil kar liya hamare pyar ko

Aur jugnu ki chamak mei pesh kiya ye paigham

Ek anghuti mere haath salamat

Kya dogi mera saath

Aur aaj pata laga

Mere ho gaye tum

Jab Shama Ek Shwab Thi

Jab Shama ek shwab thi

Tab kahan the tum

Aur jab vo jalkar khaak bangayi

To zahir ho rahe ho tum

Waqht ki darmiyaniyon ko koi rok nahin sakta

Sukhe katon ke phoolon ko koi vapas nahin la sakta

Koi to tarqueeb hogi ya koi tareeqa pyar karne ka aur mashaal uthane ka

Jalte hue parvane nei apni awaaz ki gehrayion se Shama ko sameit liya

Aur Shama ke shabab ko arooj kar diya

Kehdo Na

Kehdo to, kehdo to, kehdo zara

Kisike liye tumhein mohabbat ho gayi hai

Idd ke chand ki tarah zahir ho rahi hai

Lamhon ki bekarari sabit ho gayi hai

Aa jaon mere paas

Mere haton mei apna haat dedo

Aur udte udte zard aasmaan mei kho jaon

Abhi kyon nahin khol dete apne vo raaz ko

Kaise koi samjhega tumhari baat ko

Kabtak ye intezar ki ghadiyan gavate rahoge

Narmeen ki ye kali ko pehchaan lo

Bikhar kar ye apne ashkon mei khushk na ho jaye.

Waqht Ka Pinjra

Ab mujhei tumhari zaroorat nahin

Ab haan mei haan karne ki hifazat nahin

Ab tumse lipatne ki naubat nahin

Ab tumhari aur dekhne ki zaroorat nahin

Jaan lo ab jaan se bejaan ho gaye ho tum

Saas lete ho to lagta hai ke tod rahe ho dam

Teer aankhon se chodna chahte ho tum

Afsano ka deedar karna chahte ho tum

Waqht ke pinjre se nikalna chahte ho tum

Pharmayie hazoor kya chahte ho tum

Parvano Ka Ghera

Ai Shama tere parvane kyon ghere hue hain

Tune to apna dil de diya us bewafa ko jisne roz roz sunaye

Woh pyar bhare gaane, woh tarane jo bangaye sirph dard bhare afsane

Tera Narmeen ka dil tod diya

Bikhar gaya vo sukhe virano me

Ashq pe ashq girte gaye

Rok na saki tu

Shabnam jo kabza banaye baithi thi

Un chalakti hui palko mein

Ai Shama tere parvane kyon ghere hue hain

Sulagti hui aach ab to khatam ho chuki hai

Uske tutei hue dil ko kaise haasil karoge tum

Uski raakh mei masal kei kaise jalogei tum

Lutf

Zindagi to vaise bhi badi raftaar se ja rahi thi

Usme thodasa lutf mil jaye to harja kya

Aasman pe udte udte zamin par kadam rakhne me harja kya

Kiyamat ko chod kar

Nazro se bekarar karne mei harja kya

Woh jab bhi ayen unke parde mein rahne mei harja kya

Ghalib Ka Khyal

Ghalib jis mod sei tum guzre

Uski dhool bhi agar mil jaye

To mere sher

Aur rangeen, sharmeen ho jayein.

Chand nikla, ye raat aur hasin ho gayi

Uph ye kaale saye ko cheerti hui chandini

Kapkapi hoton sei ye baat kaise kehti

Woh abhi mujhei yaad hain

Jo chand ke dushalei mei mera ghoongat nikala karte the

Saki unhei maaph karna

Kei peene sei inkaar kiya tujhko

Kya piye jo chand ka surmayi kaajal pi jaate the

Aur mere nashein mei

Doobte hue chand ko savaar kar

Mera tassavur kiya karte the.

Main Nahin Chahti

Ye bujhayi hui aag phirse nahin sulghana

Ye rangeen sapne phirse nahin rajhana

Ye ghalat hai, ye ghalat hai

Ab maan bhi jaon mera kehna

Bandhe hue ho tum

Kisi aur kei ho tum

Peeche lelo apne kadam

Laut jaon kahin aakar bikhar nahin jaon tum

Aur jalti hui Shama ki aag mein sulagte raho tum

Kabtak Ye Intezaar Ki Ghadiyan

Kabatk ye intezaat ki ghadiyan

Gavate rahoge tum

Narmeen ki ye kali ko pehchaan lo

Bikhar kar ye apne ashkon mein

Khushk na ho jaye

Rafique Ke Liye[1]

Ye ghuzra vaqt kaise le aaoon

Ye ghadiyao ki keemat kaise chukaoon

Apne seenein se tumko kaise lagaoon

Aur shukr ada karoon tumhare hazir honeika

Aur ye mauka dubaara jeene ka

1 I wrote this poem when my husband died.

Dil Toot Gaya

Insaan kya kya soch leta hai

Kitne sapne rajhata hai

Tasveere banata hai aur unko taqseem karta hai

Kya majal hai koi uska muquabla kare

Par phirbhi zameen par aake chot kha leta hai

Kya yehi zindagi ka matlab hai

Tod ke phir jodna, jodke phir todna

Ab toot gaya hoon mai

Hasoun to kis baat par hasoun

Roun to kis baat par roun

Ab ye silsila aap hi aakar suljhana.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hashmat Rahimtoola was born in Santa Cruz, Mumbai in 1943. She grew up with a love of nature, playing in the garden of Ishrat Bungalow with her five brothers and sisters and visiting the lakes and hill stations beyond the city. She wrote her first poem at thirteen.

She was educated by nuns at St. Teresa's Convent and went on to study English Literature at St. Xavier's Convent. There, she stood first for both her BA Honors in English Literature and her minor in Islamic Culture in Bombay University. For her highest achievements in Islamic Culture she was offered a scholarship for further studies at Al Azhar in Cairo, which she declined.

She taught sixth grade for one year at Sacred Heart Boy's School. She also tutored English Literature at Narsi Monjee College for five years, where she worked with the students enrolled in the Cambridge Education enrollment partner program. Her essay on P.B. Shelley, "Prometheus Unbound," received the College's Book Award.

In 1977, Hashmat and her husband Rafique moved to the United States where she raised a family, worked as a teacher's assistant, and continued to write poetry.

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